



Large Jail Network Bulletin

Meeting the Challenge of Housing Juveniles in Adult Facilities

**by Captain Frank Henn,
Commander, Detention
Division, Arapahoe County
Sheriff's Office, Littleton,
Colorado**

If you had asked me a year ago how the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office (ACSO) handles juveniles, I would have responded that we operate **an adult** detention facility. But the 1993 "summer of violence" in the Denver metropolitan area changed that, and in 1994 Arapahoe County was housing two categories of juvenile offenders:

- Juveniles accepted under a contract with the Colorado Division of Youth Services; and
- Juveniles remanded to the custody of the sheriff after being bound over as adults.

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Although our approach may be unique, what has happened in Arapahoe County is occurring elsewhere daily. More adult facilities will become co-located facilities with responsibilities for both adult and juvenile supervision. We hope that our experience offers some useful guidance.

Accepting State's Juvenile Inmates

As a result of increasing levels of juvenile violence in Colorado, the governor last year called for a special legislative session, which produced gun control laws specifically aimed at juveniles. Approximately ninety additional juveniles were expected to enter the Colorado Division of Youth Services (DYS) system within the first two weeks after the legislation was implemented.

At that point, DYS facilities were already 150 to 300 percent over their capacity. The legislation provided funds for new construction, but it would be at least eighteen months before additional beds were available. Arapahoe County Sheriff Patrick J. Sullivan, Jr., responded to the immediate need for bedspace by offering sixty-

four beds to house DYS-sentenced juveniles.

Agreeing to accept DYS juveniles required more than signing a contract with the agency. The federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) had to be satisfied with provisions for sight/sound separation and programming. Numerous meetings took place among officials from ACSO, DYS, the Colorado Division of Criminal Justice, and members of the governor's staff. Policies and procedures were developed to identify the role and contributions of each group.

The role of the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office. At the Arapahoe County Justice Center Detention Facility (JCDF) in Englewood, two podular units of thirty-two beds each were designated to house the DYS juveniles. ACSO provided a direct supervision deputy in each of two these modules, twenty-four hours a day. As OJJDP guidelines specify that deputies assigned to work with juveniles cannot work in adult custody assignments, these deputies were volunteers. The deputies on these units worked a ten-hour shift; "power shifting" was used to enable extra deputies to be present when DYS juveniles are transported and processed. A DYS contractor handled the transportation of

juveniles from three DYS-identified facilities.

Although DYS allows juveniles to remain in their personal clothing, our view was that this promotes gang affiliation. Therefore, we used the same color coding that identifies various adult classifications. This meant that a bright yellow with "JUV" stenciled across the back provided a "gang identity" only of ACSO.

ACSO deputies held the DYS juveniles accountable through daily, frequent inspections that had real consequences. The use of true direct supervision techniques, along with the presence of DYS staff and Cherry Creek teachers, avoided the need to separate DYS juveniles into many small groups. Although we held juveniles from four different counties who had a variety of gang affiliations, our management techniques reduced gang-related incidents to a minimum.

DYS contributions. DYS provided an on-site counselor from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. daily-the non-lockdown hours. The counselor responded to needs for counseling, coordinated programs, and provided a liaison between DYS and ACSO. In addition, programs originated from DYS, which meant that the program staff was completely separate from the ACSO staff responsible for adult programs. All programs for DYS juveniles took place in the module dayroom.

Contributions of Cherry Creek Schools. Colorado's Cherry Creek school district has a reputation as one of the most progressive systems in the state. Because there had never been a juvenile detention facility in the county, working with ACSO was a new experience for Cherry Creek. Jim Tracey, a retired high school principal, accepted the challenge and assembled a staff of retired teachers, supplemented by classroom aides. Each day a team of two teachers and one aide conducted classes in both modules. A supervisor administered the project, for a total commitment of seven FTEs by Cherry Creek.

Classes were conducted from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. During the school day, each module was divided into two teaching groups. Half of the students participated in actual classroom activities, while the other half had structured P.E. classes or scheduled study/project time in their individual cells.

Sight/Sound Accommodations

To make it possible to operate a co-located facility, the planning agencies had to develop policies that assured sight/sound separation of adult and juvenile detainees. OJJDP conducts a monthly visual inspection and an audit that reviews the month's activities.

ACSO modifications to its procedures and physical plant took place in several areas.

- **Intake.** All movement of DYS juveniles to and from JCDF occurred at 8:30 p.m. Juveniles were brought in through the kitchen loading dock because it is vacant at that hour; all evening adult activity takes place in the booking area and inside the modules. Radio alerts were used when necessary to ensure that any limited adult movement was halted while DYS juveniles were escorted through the hallways to the pod processing area.

Booking. Thanks to the imagination of deputies, we were able to create an intake/processing area for juveniles in the pod storage room. The room was cleared of unnecessary items, security screens were added, and the room was divided into waiting, processing, and property storage areas. The addition of a four-shot polaroid, 35mm camera, fingerprint equipment, and a computer turned the storeroom into a complete booking area for juveniles.

- **Module windows.** The physical plant of the JCDF facility is modern: security glass has replaced bars and provides great sight capabilities. However, it was necessary to counter this to prevent inmates from seeing from one module to another. We therefore applied one-way film to the

security glass. Because OJJDP guidelines generally prohibit juveniles from seeing a deputy who works with adult inmates, the film was also applied to the pod control room, which is staffed by a deputy assigned to adult custody.

- **Sallyport windows.** Window shades were fastened to each module's sallyport door. This prevented juveniles who were moving through the pod sallyport from looking into an adult module, or vice versa. A giant sheet of black plastic hung in the pod sallyport to separate the doors to the juvenile and the adult modules. This separation enables staff to move in and out of the juvenile area. It also prevents juveniles from looking out into the sallyport or adults from looking into the juvenile modules.
- **Exercise.** The juvenile modules are located adjacent to the outside exercise yard. A "fire door" provides direct access to the yard, so there is no need to use the pod sallyport.
- **Support activities.** Most supporting activities, such as medical care and professional visits, took place inside the juvenile module. Portable walls placed immediately inside the sallyport/module door provided a clinical setting while also making it difficult to see out of the module into the sallyport.

Of course, some activities are best accommodated in the areas of the facility specifically designed for them; visits

arc an example. Visiting times for adults and juveniles

have been coordinated to allow for sight and sound separation.

Managing the Bound-Over Juvenile Population

ACSO also has faced the challenge of housing juveniles remanded to the custody of the sheriff after being bound over as adults. Ten years ago it was unusual to have a bound-over (BO) juvenile in the facility; the occasional BO juvenile was hidden in a single segregation cell and given no programming.

As recently as several years ago, Arapahoe County began to have a couple of BO juveniles in custody at one time. During that period, we used a niche in the infirmary to maintain sight/sound separation and initiated limited programs.

As gang violence has grown to alarming proportions in recent years, it has become necessary for us to identify an entire housing module for BO juveniles and to offer programs equivalent to those provided for the adult population. Sight/sound separation in the housing modules has been achieved

through the same techniques as those developed for DYS juveniles.

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Bedspace efficiencies. The current inmate population in Arapahoe County is nearly 1,000. The JCDF is podular in design, with four identical pods providing a total of twenty-four modules, each providing sixteen cells. The JCDF opened in February 1989 with 384 single cells, which we are now double bunking for a total of 752 beds, or thirty-two beds per module. The county's second facility has 127 minimum-security beds available. Triple bunking is now in effect in many modules while we pursue housing alternatives.

When our population of BO juveniles exceeded the housing capabilities of the JCDF infirmary, six juveniles were moved to occupy a thirty-two bed unit. It seemed obvious that other Colorado jails were wasting similar bedspace by housing BO juveniles. Through Colorado Jail Association contacts, Arapahoe County arranged to trade inmates. For example, Arapahoe County took the BO juveniles from Adams and Jefferson Counties, and they took females from Arapahoe County. The result has been more effective bed allocation for all three counties.

Creating control. The two cooperating counties were pleased to give us their juveniles even though it meant providing them transportation to court. We have all experienced that BO juveniles are the most difficult inmates to manage because they have no values and no respect for authority. Their gang affiliations create the need for separating groups that would assault each other if they were housed together. The current twenty-six BO juveniles in our facility have been divided into live groups that must always be kept separate.

Within one month of establishing the juvenile module, ACSO found it necessary to take special measures to establish control. A number of deputies volunteered in response to the challenge. The Disturbance Control Unit moved all BO juveniles from their cells and placed them in a holding area. During this process, all clothing was removed, searches were conducted, and new clothing was issued. Staff meanwhile conducted thorough searches of the cells and dayrooms. A work crew then completed a total clean-up of the area that included new paint, which provided the groundwork for establishing control.

Current standards of behavior are stringent. Before any juvenile is released from his cell for any reason,

an inspection occurs. If staff find graffiti, damage, or insufficient cleanliness, the juvenile remains in his cell until the deficiency is corrected. The Disturbance Control Unit continues frequent, unannounced searches of the juveniles, their cells, and the module.

Direct supervision management skills have proven essential. Without constant intervention, BO juveniles will completely trash a housing unit. Gang graffiti, destroyed property, weapons, and threats are rampant if these juveniles are left uncontrolled. Direct supervision alone can control many of these seeming incorrigibles, and we provide clear consequences for those who fail to respond.

Inmate behavior. Because of the frequency of assaults and juveniles' lack of respect for staff, we had to initiate a total lockdown early on. Initially, one room at a time was let out for an hour. Deputies identified those who began to cooperate and those who could not get along with each other. Eventually, a group of seven juveniles earned dayroom time and outdoor recreation of several hours a day. Other, smaller groups have earned lesser amounts of dayroom and yard time. A few juveniles still cannot not leave their cells without handcuffs and shackles.

Deputies recommend BO juveniles for participation in programs based on their level of coop-

eration. Education is the major program activity, and Arapahoe County has an extensive computer-based program. Requirements for sight/sound separation for BO juveniles apply specifically to the housing units alone. For programs that provide continuous supervision, juveniles can be included with adult participants.

Whether we want it to happen or not, juvenile populations in adult custody environments will continue to increase. Agencies that are building a new facility should plan for this possibility. If you are limited to an existing physical plant, the major limitation is your own creativity. We hope that our experience provides some guidance as you face the juvenile challenge.

For further information, contact Captain Frank W. Henn or contributing Deputies Marian Goff, Ron Thallas, Joseph Minkewitz, or Rich Boylan, Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office, 5685 South Court Place, Littleton, Colorado, 80120; (303) 795-4701.

The contract between Arapahoe County and the Colorado Division of Youth Services to house DYS juveniles was terminated in October 1994 because bedspace was no longer available. The collaborative program had been in operation for slightly more than one year. -ed. ■

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